THE

"HINDU MESSAGE"

A Weekly Review of Indian and World-Problems from the Hindu Standpoint.

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The **Hindu Message** stands for

(1) The Maintenance of British supremacy with self-government for India,

(2) Co-operation with the different communities of India without prejudice to Hindu Dharma,

(3) Education of the Hindus as an integral part of the Indian Nation,

(4) Advancement of Material prosperity on a spiritual basis and

(5) Dissemination of pure Hindu Culture.

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THE HIMALAYAS—III.

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.

Since Sathi's wifehood pure and true had shown
To all the world what perfect love should be,
When fired by righteous wrath's deep ecstasy

She had as her love-offering gladly thrown
Her frame in love's pure fire that bright had grown
In her with flame of watchful dignity
And incense-smoke of fragrant purity,

The Lord of all the worlds did live alone
Entranced in meditation's raptures sweet,
With tiger-skin and moon-crown'd matted hair,
With palms that lay like blossomed lotus flower
Upon his thighs, and unperturbed by heat
Or cold, upon thy slopes so bleak and bare,
Above the pain-chased joys of Time's brief hour,

The Hindu Message

THURSDAY EVENING 29, NOV. 1917.

Post-War Reform and Hindu Society—III.

We now take up the important question of separate representation in the Indian legislatures for the so-called "Orthodox" Hindu Community. We object to the word orthodox, simply because the radical revolutionaries who apply it intend thereby to express or imply a deal of contempt and arrogant depreciation. The voluble party of revolutionary radicals, who rely much on the encouragement aud support of certain foreign allies, are inclined to pose as if they constitute the only section of the Hindu Community—or even the whole Hindu Community—worth taking note of, and that its views and wishes must override those of the conservative progressivists in the land. We have already pointed out that the latter still form the vast majority of the people, and that the revolutionists or reformers form only a small, though very vocal, minority even of the men who have received a modern education. The majority of the latter still retain their love of the ancient Dharma and of the established conventions and rules of Achara (practical discipline) and hence the noisy reform faction who have abandoned them cannot claim to represent them. This is our *first* reason for claiming separate representation for ourselves in the new legislatures.

Our *second* reason is that our temples have for their chief object to carry on Vedic worship and ritual throughout the year for the prosperity of the sovereign and his people (राजराष्ट्राभिवृद्ध्यर्थम् is the actual formula used). Not only are our deities worshipped daily several times, but there are also periodical festivals called *Brahmotsavams*, held for the glorification of the Supreme Being and having the same object in view. Our gracious Emperor has now fixed a day of prayer throught the Empire to supplicate God in humility and reverence to grant victory to our army and navy now fighting heroically against the enemies of humanity. In India the Hindu Dharma has provided for the regular performance of this function throughout the year. In ancient and mediæval times, the Hindu and even Mohammedan kings, made strict arrangements for the carrying out of this particular ordinance of the Shastras in our temples, and did not neglect them,—and even now it is faithfully carried out as in the old days. The temples have thus a direct and intimate connection with the welfare and preservation of the Modern British State and Empire, and so the Hindu Community of conservative progressivists have a claim for representation in the legislature.

Our wise rulers have ever consistently maintained an attitude of strict neutrality in regard to the religious beliefs, observances, and institutions of the Indian people, and have also pledged themselves to maintain the vast and rich endowments provided by pious donors for their maintenance and, through them, for the promotion of Hindu religion and culture. We

have in view not only the temples to which we have adverted above, but also our Mutts and Choultries. By far the largest portion of the incomes from these three kinds of endowments is specifically set apart for the maintenance of Vaidik Brahmins on whom the Sastras (or the authoritative sources of the Hindu religion) have laid the injunction of preserving the sacred lore and the sacred observances which are characteristic of our religion. The learning and teaching of the Sastras and the carrying out of their injunctions so as to maintain the continuity of the religious life of the land is the main occupation of the Brahmin beneficiaries of these endowments.

The Religious Endowments Act now in force has been found to be entirely defective and unsatisfactory, and the Government of India have only recently promised to undertake legislation in the matter at the conclusion of the war. When the amendment of the existing law comes up for discussion in the Legislative Council, it is necessary that there should be a representative who will be the spokesman of the interests of the beneficiaries concerned in the proper administration of these public trusts.

The properties dedicated towards the maintenance of Hindu temples and learning form, in our view, a secular interest as important as the landed, or the trading, or the planting, interest, for the representation of which due provision has been made in the regulations laid down under the India Council's Act of 1909. The annual income of these religious endowments in this Presidency has been roughly calculated at about seventy-five lakhs of rupees,—a sum higher than the income of all the local boards and Municipalities in this Presidency put together. When the planters. the commercial interest, and the University in this Presidency have been given the privilege of representation in the legislature, it would not be improper to allow representation to this important interest which has so large a pecuniary stake in the land, apart from its connection, direct or indirect. with public welfare as already shown.

Moreover, there is always the recurrent risk of attempts being made by the unresting social radicals to sweep off one by one the great landmarks and cherished peculiarities of Hindu Dharma so that it may conform in appearance at least, if not also in essence, to the ideals and institutions of the West. We have witnessed, even in recent years, two such attempts,—the Civil Marriage Bill and the Post-Puberty Marriage Bill. The Hindu public at large which remains now as ever faithful to the teachings of the Rishis and the immemorial practice or ideals of the past must be granted the opportunity of having representatives specially chosen to warn the responsible officials of the state against violating, consciously or unconsciously, its declared policy of religious neutrality and toleration. This is an additional and most important reason why the conservative masses of the Hindu people must approach Mr. Montagu with a memorial asking for separate representation for the great interests, secular and social as well as religious, which they regard as valuable and wish particularly to safeguard and transmit unimpaired to posterity.

The Convocation Address.—I.

We are indebted to His Excellency Lord Pentland for the departure from time-honoured routine which has given us this informing address from His Excellency M. Martineau, the Governor of French India. M. Martineau began by saying that he realised the "danger" of his position quite as much as its "honour" and that "it is sometimes less stirring to fight a battle than to deliver a speech." The Tamil proverb says,—"Speech-making marks as great a crisis as dying." This proverbial wisdom of his usually silent and amiable Dravidian fellow-citizens and neighbours seems to have unconsciously influenced M. Martineau. Otherwise we cannot understand why he should have attempted to leave behind him so memorable a testament when he disappeared from the University platform. His interpretation of the prolonged drama of rivalry between France and England appears to us to be sane and sound in the light of the events happening to-day in Europe and the future which they seem to foreshadow or indicate. The three earlier acts of this wonderful drama are successively summed up by M. Martineau as "a mutual attempt to restore the original unity of the nations," "an aspiration after closer union," and "thwarted love." After all the great peace-maker appeared in our late gracious king and emperor, the seventh Edward. Then "the word or rather a gesture of one of your kings"—as M. Martineau picturesquely puts it—has brought on in rapid succession the fourth and fifth acts of this protracted and wonderful comedy of love and union between France and England which the Convocation orator characterises respectively as "a marriage of prudence" and "a marriage of affection." The former has now developed into the latter, exactly as happens with our Hindu marriages. We remember reading somewhere that, owing to the conditions and requirements of war, France, including even the villages is swarming with English visitors, residents, and perhaps even settlers of a more or less permanent kind. The rapproachment of the two peoples, present and prospective is sure to be of advantage, especially to the French. For, it will effectively arrest their already decaying race-vitality,—a decay which the enormous losses which French manhood is incurring on the battle-fields of Europe to-day are threatening to convert into a deadly tornado of destruction. M. Martineau's vivid imagination goes further and even points hopefully to the prospective joys of a time when "France and England, without abdicating any of their national prerogatives, were to form a sort of political union of both Britains." Such a union exists among both Canadas,—the French and the English. Why not "both Britains" also?

M. Martineau then attempts to interpret to his audience what he calls "the philosophy of the history of India, your own country." He makes the following rather unguarded statement:—"Looking at such few *precise* indications as there are in the Vedas and the Mahabharata, national stability of any long duration is nowhere to be found. States are formed and overthrown with equal rapidity." Some *precise* indications at least point the other way. King Trasadasyu and his successors for several generations are mentioned both in the Rig-Veda and

the Mahabharata. The Purus, also called Kurus, are known both to the Vedic age and the Mahabharata period. Kosala is a state not only known to the age of the Ramayana, but remaining even to Buddhist times. Such indications are precise enough to show that, even if there might have been changes of dynasties, there were states and nations of long duration. M. Martineau says this himself of a later period of Hindu Civilisation :—" Brahmanic India seems to have withstood better than any nation in the world the convulsions caused by those ambitions. It is marvellous that some kingdoms were able to last for twelve to fifteen centuries." In this last statement, M. Martineau refers chiefly to the Pandya, Chola and Chera kingdoms of the South. But it seems to be as true of Vedic India as of the Brahmanic India.

M. Martineau accounts for Indian political stability in Brahmanic India as follows :—" The Hindu of those days like the Hindu of to-day was mild, far from quarrelsome, combining a great delicacy of manners with a certain indifference to political controversies. He was ready to obey without being compelled to it by force. A system of law, beyond the comprehension of our Western customs, allowed every man to rise in his own sphere up to the highest steps of fortune without however, making it possible for him to overstep the bounds of a social order where covetousness and rivalries are the first results of liberty. The long political peace of the Peninsula is doubtless due to that system of law." We trust that our present rulers will appreciate this tribute to the qualities of the Indian people and will show their due appreciation of them by making concessions so as to anticipate or avoid the rise and growth of needless "political controversies."

We agree in the main with M. Martineau's characterisation of Mohammedan rule. He says:—"With few exceptions they did not act in a sectarian spirit, neither did they impose their religion by force, but adapted themselves to the institutions of India in the same way as the Romans yielded to the attractions of the charms and seductions of Hellenic civilisation." Even such repression and suffering as our ancestors underwent at times under Moslem rule was of value to them, for it was our patience, endurance, and perseverance in doing good that enabled us not only to " take captive," our Moslem rulers, but even to overthrow them in the end everywhere. The Vijayanagar Empire of South India was the Hindu empire to rise ; and, though it was eventually overthrown, the South Indian people set an example which did not fail to influence the Rajputs, the Jats, and the Mahrattas

M. Martineau remarks truly :— " Had time been allowed to them, it is impossible to conjecture what would have been the result of the contact of these two religious and of these two political systems. But before it was even possible to recover from the great shocks by the fall of kingdoms so powerful and apparently everlasting, Europeans introduced into India new methods which were destined at once to check the development of Islam and to deflect the course of Brahmanic aspirations." The history of the world is the history of the preventing of the might-have-beens of the world. Man always stops man from

going forward to his own self-appointed goal. Aggression has been the bane of human life and human activity. It is to prevent the ruin caused by the aggression of man against man that the Hindu sages enunciated and laid stress on the doctrine of *Svadharma*. *Svadharma* alone can prevent the competitive aggression which is still the determining force in shaping human destiny. Not only individuals, but communities, and nations must find their *Svadharma* so as not to interfere with each other's natural development towards the perfection of wisdom which is the divinely appointed goal. All communal and national organisations are only means to the end of enabling each individual to realise the perfection which resides in him and which is the goal of all intelligent activity.

Moral and Spiritual Discipline in Schools—III.

We have thus shown the magnitude and imperativeness of the task. We have shown also the unsatisfactory character of the moral and spiritual discipline now given in the few schools where an effort in that direction is being made. We shall now indicate briefly what are the proper and fruitful lines of work to be taken up by us to train our youths in the higher arts of life and to usher in the greater and nobler and happier era of piety and prosperity that is to be born in our beloved motherland.

The first duty is to publish proper manuals of Hinduism which will furnish a graduated course of study in our schools and colleges. A syndicate of capable men dowered with purity of life and loftiness of purpose should take up this task at once. These books should combine philosophical and emotional treatment, correlate social and spiritual ideals, and must be faithful to the past and loyal to the future. Pictures of Indian life, and lives of Indian heroes and heroines and saints and sages should be written in a vital and original and passionate manner. The rapidly dying folk-songs and folk-legends and folk-lore should be collected and preserved. Indeed in this respect the field is vast but the labourers are few.

The next pressing need is the bringing into existence of a new type of teachers. The India of the future cannot and will not allow the existence of the present type of education and the present type of the majority of the teachers. Most of the teachers of to-day have but little of the saving grace of idealism which is the truest and brightest ornament of their calling and which the teachers who bore the lamp of learning in ancient India had in an abundant measure. They should regard teaching as an act of worship and should feel the gravity of the awful issues that depend upon their training of those who are the future hope of India. They must be pious men and "wear the white flower of a blameless life." They must combine love with dignity in their relations with their students. To use the words of Sir Rabindranath Tagore: "One thing is truly needed to be a teacher of children, it is to be like children; to forget that you are wise or have come to the end of knowledge. In order to be truly the guide of children, you must never be conscious of age, or of superiority, or anything of that kind. You must be their elder brother, ready to travel with them in the same path of higher wisdom and aspiration. This is the only advice I can offer to you on this occasion,—to cultivate the spirit of the eternal child, if you must take up the task of training the children of Man."

Another aspect to be remembered is the need of starting a Hindu Educational Trust. The entire movement must be under one supreme control. Otherwise our activities will be sporadic and will be unrelated to one another. Every school worked by such a body will have at its back the strength and moral support of all the schools managed by the Trust. The national control of education and the nationalisation of the entire scheme of culture

are even more urgent and important than all the other schemes now noisily announced and discussed for the betterment of our social condition and our political situation. The Hindu Educational Trust should insist on the boarding system being of a better and nobler type than that now in vogue. It must insist on a disciplining of the daily life of the boys and girls. It must be a real and efficient means of bringing about in individual and national life a harmonious combination of the graces and glories of our immemorial social and spiritual life and the powers and energies of modern life.

One branch of the work that is likely to be neglected in the stress and hurry of the modern era is the opening of Gurukula schools where the old learning will be taught with the old and fruitful methods of study. This must go on side by side with the task of combining proper religious and moral discipline with modern courses of study in English schools. The Asrama schools will carry forward a great tradition and a great source of inspiration, because they stand in Tagore's precious and beautiful words for " the ideals of simplicity of life, clarity of spiritual vision, purity of heart, harmony with the universe, and consciousness of the infinite personality in all creation."

There must also be ceaseless and widespread agitation for the lightening of the curriculum throughout the course in modern schools. The present curriculum is terribly overweighted and if it is to continue, there will be no possibility of time being found in a suitable measure for sound and proper moral and spiritual training and instruction in schools and colleges. The present wasteful drain on the health, strength, energy, and happiness of our youths must not continue. The prevalence of early mortality among educated Indians, the curse of sterility that seems to have overtaken Indian intellect, and the general lowering of the previous standards of energy and endurance are all due to this cause of causes.

We must plead also on our literatures, our languages, our history, our ideals. and our culture being given the primary place in the courses of study that are to be. Mr. Havell says about the present educational system : " The fault of the Anglo-Indian educational system—the heinous and completely damning fault is that instead of harmonising with and supplementing national culture, it is completely antagonistic to it and destructive of it." Sir George Birdwood says of it—"The system has destroyed in Indians the love of their own literature, the quickening soul of a people, and their delight in their own arts and worst of all their repose in their own traditional and national religion, has disgusted them with their own homes, their parents, and their sisters, their very wives, and brought discontent into every family so far as its baneful influences have reached.". To remove these dreadful and denationalising evils we must remove the root-cause in the manner set forth above.

Finally, we must effect the reorganisation of university culture. Universities do not exist merely to impart knowledge. They must be temples of culture, and must lay stress on the discipline of the body and of the mind, the refinement of the emotions, and the realisation in an intimate manner of the preciousness of life and of the moral governance of the world by an All-wise, All-loving, and All-merciful Power. They must give a real and vital place in them to scientific and industrial education and thus be an effective means of bringing India into the forefront of progressive nations while at the same time they preserve the great elements of our racial genius and our scheme and type of culture and generate in our hearts an abiding love for " the fruits of hope, the fruits of imagination, those invisible things of the spirit which are the only things upon which we can sustain ourselves through this wearing world without fainting." This scheme may be regarded by some as ideal and unpracticable. But in Emerson's words " what the tender and poetic youth dreams to-day and conjures up with inarticulate speech is to-morrow the vociferated result of public opinion and the day after is the character of nations." We hope that the youth of India will realise the urgency of this work

and bring these proposals and suggestions to quick fruition and by such means lift up our holy and beloved land to her predestined seat of glory among the nations of the world.

A Happy Life.

(By M. K. Venkateswara Aiyar.)

(*continued.*)

8. Deep thought is essential for understanding the above. नोत्पद्यते विना ज्ञानं विचारेणान्यसाधनैः. It is impossible to gain knowledge by anything other than deep thought. But what are we to think about? This question has been answered in the following sloka by Sree Sankaracharya.

कोऽहं कथमिदं जातं को वै कर्तास्य विद्यते ।

Who am I? How was this created? Who created this and with what did he create? It is thoughts like these which will bring about knowledge. As regards the 1st question "Who am I" if we pay a little attention to the use of the word 'I' in our daily conversation, we shall be able to understand its nature very well. When we say "'I' came to this Hall," by 'I' we understand the physical body, life energy, mind, intelligence and the ego with the substratum *chit*. But when we say 'My mind' we give up two of the coatings Annamaya and the Pranamaya. When we say my ego we give two more of the coatings Manomaya and Vignanamaya. We are not able to get a clearer conception of the substratum behind the ego by thinking. But if we understand these different uses of the word 'I' we shall find that the differences between us is in the coatings and not in the owner, the self. When once this is realised we shall begin to feel that we are only different parts of one supreme being, the self, who is the owner of all and that each of us can be compared to the different organs of an individual who is like a miniature God. This feeling will begin to create mutual love and sympathy and will lead to an earnest attempt to help each other so much so that we shall find that our only duty is to be as helpful to others as possible and that there is nothing to be gained for ourselves alone. As we shall see that it is only when we cultivate love, charity and this kind of duty in us that we have a peaceful mind wherein blissful self is reflected giving rise to supreme happiness, we shall begin to forget our little self and attempt to identify ourselves with the Higher self. When we know that this Higher self is the only true entity and that what we called "the little self" is only the self imagined to be circumscribed and coated by our ego and the Kosas, we shall attempt to draw back our mind from these unreal appearances and begin to concentrate it on the real. At first we shall be able to control only the external senses, then gradually the internal aspect also will be controlled when we get a glimpse of the inner self.

Gradually we shall cultivate toleration as we shall see that wrong appearances and actions are only temporary. Then we shall take more pleasure in the inner observations and pay attention to the study of the inner nature alone. Hence mind will be concentrated completely. The first differentiation of the Higher Self and we call in Sanskrit *Viveka*, the next six qualifications mentioned above *Samadishatka*. But when we find that we are not able to extricate ourselves from the worldly attractions, our earnest attempt for freedom will be called *Mumukshuta* and our drawings away our mind from the worldly attractions we call *Vairagya*. When these four qualifications are attained, the lessons in Vedanta Philosophy will be more intelligible than before. It is when we have gained these four qualifications but have not completely realised all Vedantic teachings we can be said to be enjoying a perfect worldly happy life which will lead to the realisation of the supreme bliss. It is then we are said to have a *Santa* state of mind. So to summarise the whole thing we must attempt to develop our capacities by earnest work as far as we can and then control and harmonise our actions in order that we may lead a happy life when living and become one with God when we are said to die. It is this earnest action that has been preached in the Gita and not the

inactive dull state which is sometimes mistaken for *Samadhi* giving rise to subsequent repentance. Therefore we should never forget that our duty is to work earnestly and calmly and that for the sake of enhancing the happiness of all our fellow beings. It is then and then alone that we really enjoy happiness in self-satisfaction arising from altruistic duty and that happiness will be eternal and unsurpassable called *Nitya Niratisaya Brahmanandam.*

Statutory Law of the land and Personal or Communal Laws.

(By R. Ganapathy Aiyar B.A., B.L.)

The relation existing between the law framed by a Legislative body in the State known as statutory law and the rules and principles observed as binding upon themselves by different communities in the State, either by virtue of their sacredness as a religious sanction or on account of the length of their practices, known as personal or communal laws and enforced by their own tribunals, has been very often misunderstood. It is seen that even some members of the Legislative Council have no clear conception about the relation of the two systems of law from the fact of their having made strenuous attempts to enact the Basu's Civil Marriage Bill and the Post Puberty Marriage Bill, for example. It is necessary to bear in mind the scope and limitations of the two systems of law, especially in a country like India, inhabited by various communities, each venerating different communal laws as a sacred part of their religion.

Every man is free to act as he pleases, unless he is restrained by any law of the land under an external threat of punishment by a sovereign body of legislature as in the crude English Jurisprudence as developed by Austin or by long-observed custom based on the inner individual consciousness, educated as a routine, as in the continental Jurisprudence as developed by Savigny. In India, under modern conditions, we find a co-ordination of both, each having its own recognised limits and sphere of operation. The general statutory law of the land has recognised the personal law of the Hindus, Muhammadans etc. as applicable to them, in the matter of "succession, inheritance, marriage, or caste or any religious usage or institution and the legislature cannot abrogate a portion of the personal law and free certain persons from obedience to that portion and obligations thereof. When once the operation of the personal law is recognised, the obligation of the general Legislature is *to recognise it and enforce it in its entirety.*

For, you cannot have one law (personal law)—restraining people from doing a thing and the law (General law)—enabling them to revolt against it, freeing them from the injunctions and allowing them to act as they please. That will be an anomoly. The absurdity of this situation was lost sight of by several persons in the recent controversies relating to the attempted inroads on Hindu law, when they tried to support them as optional legislation.

Since the Acts of Parliament and the charters of the High Courts expressly recognise the personal law of the Hindus, Muhammadans etc., in the matter of "succession, inheritance, marriage or caste or any religious usage or institution," a local Legislature and not even the Imperial Legislature, will have any right to interfere with it. Any interference will be *ultra vires* and high-handed. As for Imperial Crown and Parliament, the condition of transfer of the Indian Government after the mutiny is based upon the Imperial Proclamation of Religious Neutrality and the willing allegiance of the Indian people is depending thereon, it would appear that any disregard of the solemn Proclamation of Religious Neutrality will render it a "scrap of paper." Of course, such a disregard is very far from the minds of any of our rulers as will be clear from the following statement of the great Jurist Sir Fitz-James Stephen on behalf of the Government of India in the course of the debate on the Special Marriage Act:—

"There is a distinction between Hindu law as a law binding only on those who submit to it of their own free will, and treating it as a law binding on those who submit to it only in so far as they choose

to do so. It is surely one thing to say to Hindus "You are at liberty to change your law and religion if you think proper, and you shall suffer no loss by so doing" and quite another thing to say to them "you are at liberty to play fast and loose with your law and religion; you shall, if you please, be at one and the same time a Hindu and not a Hindu." By recognising the existence of the Hindu Religion as a Personal law on this matter of marriage, I think *that we have contracted an obligation to enforce its provisions in their entirety* upon those who choose to live under them, just as we have, by establishing the general principles of religious freedom, contracted a further obligation to protect any one who chooses to leave the Hindu religion against injury for having done so, and to provide him with institutions recognised by law and suitable to his peculiar position. I think that it is hardly possible to hold other language on the subject than this, "Be a Hindu or not as you please; but be one thing or the other, and do not ask us to undertake the impossible task of constructing some compromise between Hinduism and Non-Hinduism, which will enable you to evade the necessity of knowing your own mind."

Again during the discussion of Basu's Civil Marriage Bill the Hon'ble Mr. Jenkins, on behalf of the Government of India, reiterated the obligation and policy of the Indian Government as enunciated above and further declared:—

"After all, the people who decide these matters are the orthodox parties. It is not for the dissidents who break away from a religion or community to say whether they should still retain the name or whether they are still the same people. It is those who remain and those who hold to the old rites and the old customs who decide whether the dissidents are true members of the Community or not......It is a fixed principle of the Government of India not to interfere in any way whatever with the personal laws and customs of the different people of India unless they have strong conclusive evidence that the change is desired by the people who are affected, and that is the policy to which, I hope we shall continue to adhere."

It may be hoped that such forcible and weighty remarks of the Imperial Government with respect to their obligations and policy regarding the scope of the personal law of the Hindus will not be ignored or lost sight of, in the future reforms of Self-Government. So long as the British Crown and Parliament remain the paramount power in the Indian Empire, (which may be hoped to remain long), keeping order therein and protecting the people and country from aggressions and invasions thereby entitling them to the allegiance of the people, so long shall the Indian Legislatures be made to scrupulously recognise the *Personal Law of the Hindus in their entirety* in the matter of their "succession, inheritance, marriage or caste or any religious usage or institution," as here-to-fore, without the least interference with them, whatever may be the form of the Indian Government or Legislatures into which they may be ultimately shaped.

The principle of neutrality has conduced as much to the preservation of our law and religion, as it has freed the Imperial Government from the obligations of directly enforcing the law and religion of the country in very many respects. If once the principle of neutrality is violated, the Government will have to face the contingency of being asked by a vast majority to pass enactments enforcing the various portions of our law and religion and convert the Personal law into General Law of the land in other respects. In the Indian Nation composed of several races and communities, such a position will lead only to frequent strifes and heart-burnings and the only policy that will be the wisest and the safest will be to recognise the *Personal laws in their absolute entirety* in certain matters and to exclude them absolutely from the scope and sphere of the future Indian Legislatures. It may be hoped that the Right Hon'ble Mr. Montagu will specially provide for this exclusion of Personal laws in his scheme of Reforms for granting Self-Government to India.

Notes and Comments.

We have already stated in commenting on Mr. Theagaraya Chettiar's speech at the Non-Brahmin conference at Bezwada, that we are perfectly at one with him in holding that India's future greatness and prosperity largely depends on her success in the work of recovering her ancient industrial and commercial prosperity. But it is strange that he should speak with contempt of the Brahmins as "this class which had for centuries together lived upon the sweat of others' brows, which had spent time upon study and meditation having no other work to do." The late Thomas Carlyle once called himself not only a "writer of books," but also a "working-man." Those who devote themselves to "study and meditation" are as much "working-men" as those who do manual or mechanical work, and labour as much for the good of mankind as others. Let not Mr. Chettiar regard with contempt those who devote themselves to "study and meditation." Let him remember that men as great as himself, or greater, have thought differently. For instance, Lord Macdonnel, a very great man indeed, addressed a body of Benares Pandits as follows:— "Living in retirement and studious abstraction, you maintain the practice and traditions of learning and reflection, which have so enriched the literature of your country and preserved its religious ideals." Those who "spend time upon study and meditation" also live on the sweat of their own brows as others. Let Mr. Chettiar revile the Brahmins, if that pleases him. But it is certainly wrong to hold that "study and meditation" are not hard and laborious tasks and that those who engage in them "toil not, neither do they spin," like the "lilies of the field." A country which can produce no toilers in the work of "study and meditation" is surely not a civilised one, and cannot be in a prosperous state even in regard to her industry and commerce. For those too, depend for their prosperity on "study and meditation" devoted to those branches of knowledge. Man, however, does not live by bread alone. He is, among the animal creation the only being who is capable of thinking and study, and cannot fail to discover that he is in reality an immortal soul, and can attain to the condition of immortality which is his birthright. In India, it is not only the Brahmins who have devoted themselves to "study and meditation." Others have done the same, too; and Sri Krishna has pointed out (Gita IX 32, 33) that not only Brahmins and Kshatriyas, but also Vaisyas and Sudras and women reach the bliss of liberation of Samsara. They, too, must reach it only by resorting to "study and meditation." Wealth is certainly a great aim of life,— one of the four kinds of Purusharthas. But, as the Upanishads have pointed out,— 'न वित्तेन तर्पणीयो मनुष्यः' "Not by (great) wealth alone is man made contented and happy." The burden of thought is ever on men, and it will continue to vex us till we reach our appointed goal of immortality. The same Upanishad (the *Katha*) says:— 'न ह्यध्रुवैः प्राप्यते हि ध्रुवं तत्' "The eternal (bliss) is not to be gained by merely ephemeral means or possessions." Let not Mr. Chettiar despise those— Brahmins or others— who devote themselves to "study and meditation."

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Sir Subramania Iyer said at the meeting held in the Gokhale Hall, Madras, on behalf of the Muslim Interned:— "Being a Theosophist, I am a cosmopolitan in matters of religion. I may claim to be as much a Mohammedan as a Hindu, etc." In the *first* place, what has religion to do with a meeting at which men of all creeds are assembled on the common ground of Indian citizenship and to claim the right of personal freedom and its protection for all. In the *second* place, if he spoke as a Theosopist and cosmopolitan, being as much a Mohammedan as any Mohammedan himself, why did he, in the same speech claim the Hindus only as "my co-religionists" and not the Mohammedans. The Theosophists claim that "occultism" is the common basis of all religions. They have never yet been able to define what is occultism. They vaguely speak of Senzar

Scriptures, Akasic Records, the Thibetan or Himalayan Brothers, Rents in the veil of Isis, etc. But so many splits have occurred in the past in the Theosophical society over this question of occultism and its methods that it were best that Theosophists keep them all hidden from public veiw as they have now for some time done and devote themselves to the practical problems of life. *Thirdly*, Sir Subramania Iyer has now for some time presented himself to the world as the apostle of a new dispensation— the creed of Suddha Dharma Mandala. What is the relation of this new creed to the occultism of Theosophy ? "Cosmopolitanism in religion" must be something strange, indeed, if it can land one into all sorts of bewildering sensations, uncertainties, allurements, and ambitions.

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Dewan Bahadur P. Rajagopalachariar has very recently expressed his opinion that "the old pial school teachers were an ignorant set of people." Their knowledge, indeed, might not have been such as to meet modern conditions and requirements. But a statesman so wise and discriminating as the Dewan Bahadur ought not to forget that the knowledge they possessed suited very well the India we have left behind. They taught not only the three Rs efficiently— far more efficiently, perhaps, than now— but all the virtues on which the Hindus have hitherto set a value, though some despise them now— viz., love of God, reverence for parents and elders, humility, contentment, chastity, patience etc. All the great Hindu saints, teachers, scholars, writers, rulers and statesmen of the past— men whom, in many respects, our best men to-day cannot excel had their early training in these pial schools only. Any one could learn, in six months and at the cost of 4 annas a month or less, from the old pial school teacher what he cannot learn in half as many years from the teachers and schools in the elementary schools system of to-day. The precepts of *Attisudi* and *Nitisara* are unrivalled by anything to be found in our new elementary readers, and many even of our graduates could not fail even now to find them useful, instructive, and elevating. The "grit" which the Dewan Bahadur finds wanting in the young men produced under the present system of education was certainly given by the older system. It certainly made men steady and sober,— qualities which are not produced now by the existing system. For centuries it supplied the elementary training on which all the Hindus of the past, especially the higher men among them, were enabled to build their acquisitions of subsequent years and so were helped to maintain their ancient racial culture and civilisation.

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The Editor of "The Social Reform Ad ocate," in his "Notes" of the issue of the 10th inst. writes regarding a speech delivered by His Holiness Sri Sankaracharya of the Kamakoti Peetha of Kumbakonam :— "One may ask why His Holiness does not insist upon the excommunication of all fallen Brahmins, who have abandoned mendicancy and the rigid discipline. The question then will be, who will remain in the caste ? Why should the excommunicated ones not form a non-Brahmin caste ?" We will attempt to answer all these three questions. *First*, His Holiness never takes it on himself to excommunicate any one. This duty falls on the community itself— at least among the Smartha Brahmins. *Secondly*, all whom the community does not cast out and regards as not "fallen" will remain in the caste. The rest go out. *Thirdly*, the excommunicated people do not choose to form a non-Brahmin caste. If they choose to do so, there is none to object. They try to remain in more or less touch with their caste— with such individuals and families as are not exacting in their demands for conformity. The truth is that there is a general belief that this is the Kali-Yuga, the age of sin, sensualism, and strife and that men are generally weak in their ethical nature or convictions. There is also an idea that Dharma is eternal and will not be altogether lost, and that the Supreme Being will in time incarnate himself to set matters right. Meanwhile, however, great Pandits and teachers are everywhere at work lecturing and teaching and new

institutions are being started for the purpose of preserving the Hindu Dharmic society. Let us hope for the best.

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In the midst of a chorus of praise and appreciation, we have had a homily read to us by the editor of *United India and Native States* in the issue of that self-laudatory organ dated 15th inst. The homily runs in the strain of the outpourings of a fire-eater. His view that the Varnashrama movement has been engineered by a few Tanjore Brahmins and represents the last gasp of a tottering orthodoxy is ridiculous in the extreme and is a distant cousin of the absurd view that the Hindu system of Dharma was the creation of designing priest-craft. The writer of the editorial note seems to be a waverer and a man of unsettled views and calls the advanced wing of the social reform party as "overhasty in its condemnation of traditions and advocacy of modernism." He objects to the advocates of the policy of *The Hindu Message* calling themselves as "conservative progressivists" because he thinks that phrase is the monopoly of those whom he has called the National class of social reformers "who take their stand on the Sastras and extend their hands to gather and assimilate those aspects of modernism that are easily grafted on." We beg leave to enter our emphatic protest against such a usurpation of the name, as the description so admirable as that above stated fits us exactly. We thank our friend for his felicitous description of us and our aims.

Our friend thinks that the system of caste by birth, the Hindu system of marriages and the Hindu system of religious regulation of individual and social life are "accidents of history and not consecrated by the sanctions of true Hinduism." We do not know what books on History our friend has had the good fortune of studying. But we are afraid that they cannot be found in any sublunary libraries. As for "true Hinduism" we have not yet had the happiness of knowing our friend's "true Hinduism." We are content with the Hinduism of our Vedas, our Smritis and our Gita, and make a present of the so-called "true Hinduism" to our friend and his friends.

Our friend speaks of our "chauvinism." Here is yet another "ism." Our contemporary seems to revel in "isms." There is one "ism" that is quite necessary in regard to him and that is *exorcism*. We hope that his regular study of *The Hindu Message* will exorcise his erroneous notions out of his head.

Our contemporary calls our attitude as "a leech-like clinging to a sense-divorced tradition." Even if this were true, it is much better than hugging God-divorced guesses. But it is as untrure to say that we insist on "the theory that all the existing social institutions have their sanction in the Vedas themselves." We want thorough reformation but we want it to be in the direction of a fuller and more loyal obedience to Dharma.

The one seemingly rationalistic ground advanced by our contemporary is that revival is impossible in nature. But what we want is not revival for there has been no death and hence there is no need for revival. There have been a few diseases, some of them due to carelessness and others due to contagion. We only make a humble and penitent supplication to the Eternal Physician, our Vaidyeshvara, to cure us and save us.

Our contemporary then says that our advocacy has no place because we are coming into the era of cosmopolitanism and because our ideals will destroy national harmony and unity. The growing cosmopolitanism of the world is amply demonstrated by the world-war now going on and we need not deal with it further. The only possible cosmopolitanism is not that which can be brought about by each race approximating to every other race but that which will result from all of them obeying the will of God and preferring service and love to conquest and hate. The social and spiritual ideals which we cherish and advocate will not hinder but will help National harmony and unity. Indeed the miserable hatreds and schisms of to-day are the result of the crude and untrue opinions of editors and humbler mortals who belong to the same group of servants and savi-

ours of India as our contemporary and who are pleased to call themselves "reasoning people". We laugh at the parting shot by him that we are acting "in a manner suicidal to the permanent interests of Hindus, of India, and of humanity." We leave our work and its results in the hands of God who knows these permanent interests at least as well as our omniscient contemporary.

The Bhagavad Gita

With an English Exposition

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri B. A. B. L.

(The substance of the lectures now being delivered at Trichinopoly.)

INTRODUCTORY.

(*continued*)

Another qestion asked is, whether the teachings of the Lord in the Gita are suitable to all ages? The nectar of salvation will confer immortality not on men of one age or one land alone but on all. Arjuna stood before the Lord as the typical man नर and has been the means of enlightenment of the whole universe for all time.

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दनः ।
पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥

I may refer here also to a beautiful verse in the *Bhagevata* which says:

एष हि लोकानां शिवः पन्थाः सनातनः ।
यं पूर्वे चानुसंतस्थुः यत्प्रमाणं जनार्दनः ॥

It is again asked, why did the Lord impart his gracious teachings on the battlefield and with restrictions imposed by the difficulties of the time and place chosen for the imparting of the instruction (*Upadesa*)? But all that is required for the imparting of instruction is प्रसङ्गानुकूल्य, श्रोत्रानुकूल्य, and वक्त्रानुकूल्य (suitableness of opportunity, of the pupil, and of the teacher.) This combination was perfect in the present case. The propriety of the Lord's choosing the battlefield as the scene of his discourse is oblivious. The travail of Arjuna's soul made his enlightenment and uplift absolutely necessary. Of course Sri Krishna could have by his divine will compelled Arjuna to fight. But it would have been an act of cruel kindness to Arjuna. The *Bhagavad Gita* describes the compassion and love of a real teacher thus:

ब्रूयुः स्निग्धस्य शिष्यस्य गुरवो गुह्यमप्युत ।

Other inquirers ask, why does the Gita begin with metaphysics and not with the problems of conduct directly? The first reason is that Arjunas's special inner difficulty arose by reason of his erroneous notions about the nature of the soul. His *Soka* (grief) was due to *Moha* (illusion) about the nature of the soul and about the nature of duty Secondly, to solve a problem of conduct a right idea of duty is necessary. Dharma is not rightly understood with wrong conceptions about the soul, about God, and about the true aim of life which is the attainment of union with God. Therefore the Lord goes to the root of things at the very outset of the discourse. The body and the soul are not identical—that is the basic statement on which the fair fabric of God-ward leading truths is raised. *Moksha* is स्वरूपप्राप्ति. The recovery of our true nature alone can give us permanent happiness, for, all things acquired must go away. The scripture is ज्ञापक and not कारक. It reminds us of true and divine nature and does not ask to acquire as salvation something which is outside of ourselves. It shows to us the glorious ornament about our neck (कण्ठाभरण) which we did not see and which we regarded aa best and which brings us joy and elation when discovered to be with us. It is the acquitting by the higher court of God-realisation the soul that was held in bondage by the lower court of desire. Such release from bondage is not the acquisition of a new element of joy but the attainment of our own bright freedom and joy.

The teachings of the Gita are in perfect harmony with the teachings contained in all the other portions of the Mahabharata. The view that the Gita is an interpolation in the epic is thus absurd. The interpolation theory is always trotted when a man wants to condemn a thing or to make a show of scholarship or undermine the faith of others. I may refer here to the closing verses of the *Bharata* which show how there is perfect harmony between the teachings of the Gita and those of Mahabharata generally.

'मातापितृसहस्राणि पुत्रदारशतानि च ।
संसारेष्वनुभूतानि यान्ति यास्यन्ति चापरे ॥
हर्षस्थानसहस्राणि भयस्थानशतानि च ।
दिवसे दिवसे मूढमाविशन्ति न पण्डितम् ॥
उर्ध्वबाहुर्विरौम्येष न च कश्चिच्छृणोति मे ।
धर्मादर्थश्च कामश्च स किमर्थं न सेव्यते ॥
न जातु कामान्न भयान्न लोभात्
धर्मं त्यजेज्जीवितस्यापि हेतोः ।
नित्यो धर्मः सुखदुःखे त्वनित्ये
जीवो नित्यो हेतुरस्य त्वनित्यः ॥

Correspondence.

The views of our contributors and correspondents do not necessarily reflect the policy of this Review—Ed.

The New Cult of Dis-obedience?

A REPLY

(BY S. A. VANESWAR, M.A., B.L.)

My attention has been drawn to the article under the above title in the *Hindu Message* of 8th November, in which I am accused of indulging "in violent denunciation" of the cult of obedience in India in the pages of the *Commonweal* of October 19th. I may at the outset disown any intention, past or present, to employ denunciation, much less of the violent brand. The purpose of my article was to depict the transformation of Modern India which has been brought about by the influence of Western thought and ideals diffused through English History and Literature and which is clearly revealed in all aspects of Indian life to-day, social, political and religious. In matters social and spiritual, I have pointed out that the spirit of reform and progress, of critical search and enquiry has asserted itself with the result that institutions and observances have to justify their *present* existence by their useful or essential functions and are not allowed to rest merely on their antiquity, however hoary. I must confess my failure to perceive how this view in any way militates against compliance with the directions of Dharma. Nor is it in the least suggested by me that Dharma possesses no higher sanction than law and that like the latter it should be brought into accord with the changing needs and conditions that mark social advancement. It is easily and readily recognized that Dharma, as laying down rules of conduct leading to salvation, is liberal, elastic and comprehensive enough to suit individuals of varied capacity and temperament and to be true and immutable for all time. It has been *the basic ideal* of Hindus from time immemorial and will continue to be so, unless indeed they make a *tabula rosa* of their spirituality. Not from Parliamentary legislation or Royal fiat, but by reason of abiding truth and revelation found in it does Dharma derive its force and significance. So long as Hindu, nay human, ideal of spirituality is God-realisation, the path of Dharma will not be neglected. In this respect, it is certainly above the plane of doubt or controversy.

Turning to the intellectual criterion set up by the modern mind, it may be pointed out that critical spirit is not necessarily destructive and intolerant. On the other hand, critical appreciation and intellectual accord are far more genuine, lasting and valuable than unreasoning acquiescence and conventional worship. Dharma in its broad and uplifting sense can well stand and satisfy the test of modern thought. Its sublime verities will be enriched in their power and appeal when they are *realised* by the intellect to be helpful and comprehensive and by the soul to be supremely satisfying. I am convinced that the basis of Dharma is too sacred and stable to crumble at the touch of the critical spirit. Truth is not so nebulous and shifting that it can be seen only in glimpses of dreamy vision or hypnotic suggestion.—Rather, it is so precious and appealing that in the open air of free thought and light of reason it can be well recognized as an intellectual reality and sublime rule of conduct. *In so far then as Dharma embodies and consecrates Truth, it will and must command intellectual veneration.* Judged even by the modern standard, Dharma only acquires greater worth and more compelling influence.

Thus rational investigation into Religion is not to be deemed irreverent or infructuous. I am reminded in this connection of the noble words of Swami Vivekananda that are as true to-day as when they were uttered:—"Believing certain things because an organized body of priests tell him to believe, believing because it is written in certain books, or because his people like him to believe, the modern man knows to be impossible for him...... If a Religion is destroyed by rationalistic investigations, it was then all the time useless, unworthy superstition and the sooner it goes out, the better." And the Hindu under modern influences necessarily imbibes this spirit of discrimination and, discarding unessential trappingss, learns to value aright the rich spiritual inheritance that has descended to him through the centuries.

Apart from the *innate* mandate of truth that Dharma conveys, critical enquiry is clearly helpful in demonstrating its *practical* value and importance in satisfying the inward and incessant yearnings of the soul towards God-realisation. Again, where texts of Rishis are many and perplexing and commentaries on them prove obscure and bewildering it is Reason that comes to our rescue and enables to explain or harmonize, discard or follow the rules of Dharma attuned to our age and avocation. Dharma is prized and pursued *all the more* because it satisfies the needs of mind and soul. The need and utility of critical sifting is emphasized by the fact that today we find Social Reformers taking their stand on *shastraic* authority and yet urging on the *same* basis the adoption or abolition of ideas and institutions in a manner that will rejoice the heart of a perfectly Westernized Indian. Controversies as to the significance of Caste and the marriageable age of Hindu girls are freely fed with materials avowedly taken from Dharmasastras. Here again *critical choice of path* becomes necessary. Illustrations can be multiplied to show that intellectual conviction will only deepen, and not uproot, spiritual fervour. To say that "impeachment" can only proceed from "ignorance of the meaning and value of Dharma" is at the least suggestive of a nervous apprehension of an adverse verdict even before the trial has commenced. It may end as well in putting on it the *imprimatur* of truth and authority.

My statement that "Priest-craft in Religion and repression in Politics belong to the irrevocable past" has been somehow construed as suggesting that Dharma had its origin in priestcraft. It can only mean that despotism, theocratic and monarchical alike, is out of date in the present age of critical scrutiny and free thought. I do not represent Dharma to be the handiwork of Hindu priesthood. Moreover it is undeniable that there are certain acts and observances enjoined by Priests which cannot be justified and cannot be regarded otherwise than as meaningless, antiquated, supercititions or undesirable if not pernicious. Some of them keep up mere forms and know not that their spirit has fled. Some again even deviate from Dharma and are paraded as *achara* or Apath-Dharma. The same may be said of certain customs and institutions that are incompatible with progress itself under present conditions. To recognise this fact is not to belittle priestly function and the part it plays in the life of a Hindu householder.

Without disputing or imperilling the *role* of the priest in religious life, it may well be desired that he should fulfil his functions in consonance, not in conflict, wfth modern spirit and requirements. I need not elaborate here what is found in common experience. There is much of overdoing and adherence to the letter of texts on the part of Hindu priests and pundits today. With some illustrious exceptions, they do not answer to the description of their prototype in ancient times. The reasons for this unsatisfactory position are many and obvious. Chief among them must be mentioned the neglect of Sanskrit culture and literature involving the loss to us of our precious religious heritage and the lack of proper support and appreciation for learned pandits and purohits. The working of Hindu Social polity has also been markedly altered. Old conditions have passed away. Under the stress of competition and other modern forces, Brahmins as a class can no longer have the privilege and duty of offering counsel and ministrations as in the past; Vaishyas do not now find themselves enjoying the prosperous monopoly of being the mercantile and industrial community and Sudras are not to be deemed to supply labor-force alone. It is *inevitable*, therefore, that the priestly class of today should be unable to step up to the pedestal of their forerunners. Their failings are not pointed out in the spirit of condemnation but in the fervent hope of improvement alike in their status and function, thereby rendering them better equipped for their sacred and indispensable mission in our land.

In the *Commonweal* I have not written a word nor would I ever mean to discredit the Hindu priest on the score of the poor remuneration accorded to him. I believe this sad condition should evoke pity, rather than ridicule. But the critic in your journal remarks in an apologetic tone.—"Our priests have very humble duties to perform and *hence* receive only a very poor remuneration". I would put it contrariwise and say that "poor remuneration" has really depressed the priest and clouded the dignity and value of his ministrations. We are not however concerned here with the *economic* question of the relation between the nature of work and its emolument and the effiiciency of a "*marginal*" priest. Such a calculation of his services, moreover, would be sordid and mercenary. *Humble but none the less meritorious and invaluable are the true priest's services in showing our way to salvation and deliverance from the bondage of Karma.* What are earthly possessions in comparison with the divine and eternal inheritance for which the Soul in man has been yearning in all ages and countries?

My purpose in this reply has been to show that in our care for external forms and ceremonials, we should not lose sight of their inner appeal and significance. The Time-spirt is real and irresistible. Verily, "men's minds enlarge with the process of the suns." What satisfied a previous generation is spurned by its successor. The fetish of one age becomes the mockery of the next. This fact is specially illustrated by the fate of social observances and organizations. Crust has to be separated from kernel, chaff winnowed away from grain. And this is the work of the critical spirit which is alive to prevalent influences. Such a spirit is not rank scepticism or blatant agnosticism; it does not stir up any mutiny against social ideals. It stands for discrimination, for belief mellowed by Reason. We feel ourselves to be thinking entities, not helpless automatons. No longer need we grope though the abyss of doubt and dismay. We have the bright ray of intellect, the sidelight of the world's experience, to illumine the path before us.

There are no darker pages in the history of human civilization than those recording religious wars and persecutions. What is it but enlightened outlook, critical insight and clam reasoning that has *to-day* enabled the followers of all the Religions to stand on the common fundamental basis of the Fatherhood of God and the Brother-hood of Man? Such a concord is a striking result of rational comparative study free from pet prejudice and *doctrinaire* rigidity. Do we not prize and treasure up all the more reverently *because* of this new-born consciousness and harmony the great truth crystalised in the divine language of the Bhagavad Gita:—

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥

"However men approach Me, even so do I welcome them, for the path men take from every side is mine, O, Partha" and in that familiar hymn which says, "As streams taking their rise in different places all mingle their water in the same sea, so, O Lord, the different paths that men take through different tendencies, various as they appear. crooked or straight, all lead unto thee." Critical enquiry is thus a necessary help to genuine, intelligent appreciation of texts and teachings; it also affords deliverance from fungoid custom, suprestition and intellectual servitude.

[Mr. S. A. Vanesvar, whose views we criticised without even giving his name in order that our own views may have for him no association of a personal kind, has sent the above *very long* reply. We cannot ordinarily find space for such lengthy communications from correspondents. Still we do not want to disoblige the gentleman who addresses us now for the first time. Hence we have printed his reply in full and shall add a rejoinder in our next issue and close the controversy.—Ed.]